THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTIN (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) The average minimum and maximum retail price of sugar in the four principal markets of the country during the months of January 2004, December 2004 and July 2005 (upto 13th) were Rs. 13.25-16.00, Rs. 17.50-19.00 and Rs. 17.50-20.50 per Kg. respectively.

(c) Huge production of sugar upto 2002-03 and consequent accumulation of sugar stocks resulted in low retail prices upto 2004. However, subsequent relative increase in prices may be attributed to relative lower production of sugar and higher costs of production.

Decline in Wheat and Rice production

532. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Food Corporation of India expects the wheat output to be lower this year by almost 5 million tonnes;

(b) whether Government holds enough buffer stock of wheat and rice for distribution under welfare schemes; and

(c) whether the grain trading community apprehends that the country might return to a situation of 1999 when the Southern States imported wheat as they found it cheaper than moving the stocks from northern wheat producing areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

New Food and Public Distribution Policy

†533. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated a New Food and Public Distribution Policy; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.